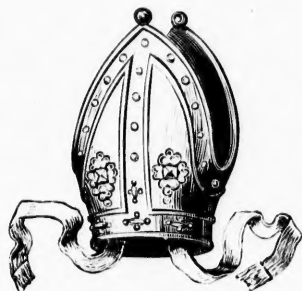


M. J. Gaurang.

Nov 9<sup>th</sup> 1892.



In Memoriam



# A Sermon

PREACHED ON THE DEATH OF

THE MOST REVEREND JOHN MEDLEY, D.D.

FIRST BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON, N. B.  
METROPOLITAN OF THE PROVINCE OF CANADA.

ON SUNDAY:

THE ELEVENTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1892,

AT

The Mission Church of Saint John Baptist.

---

BY

THE REVEREND PELHAM WILLIAMS, D.D.

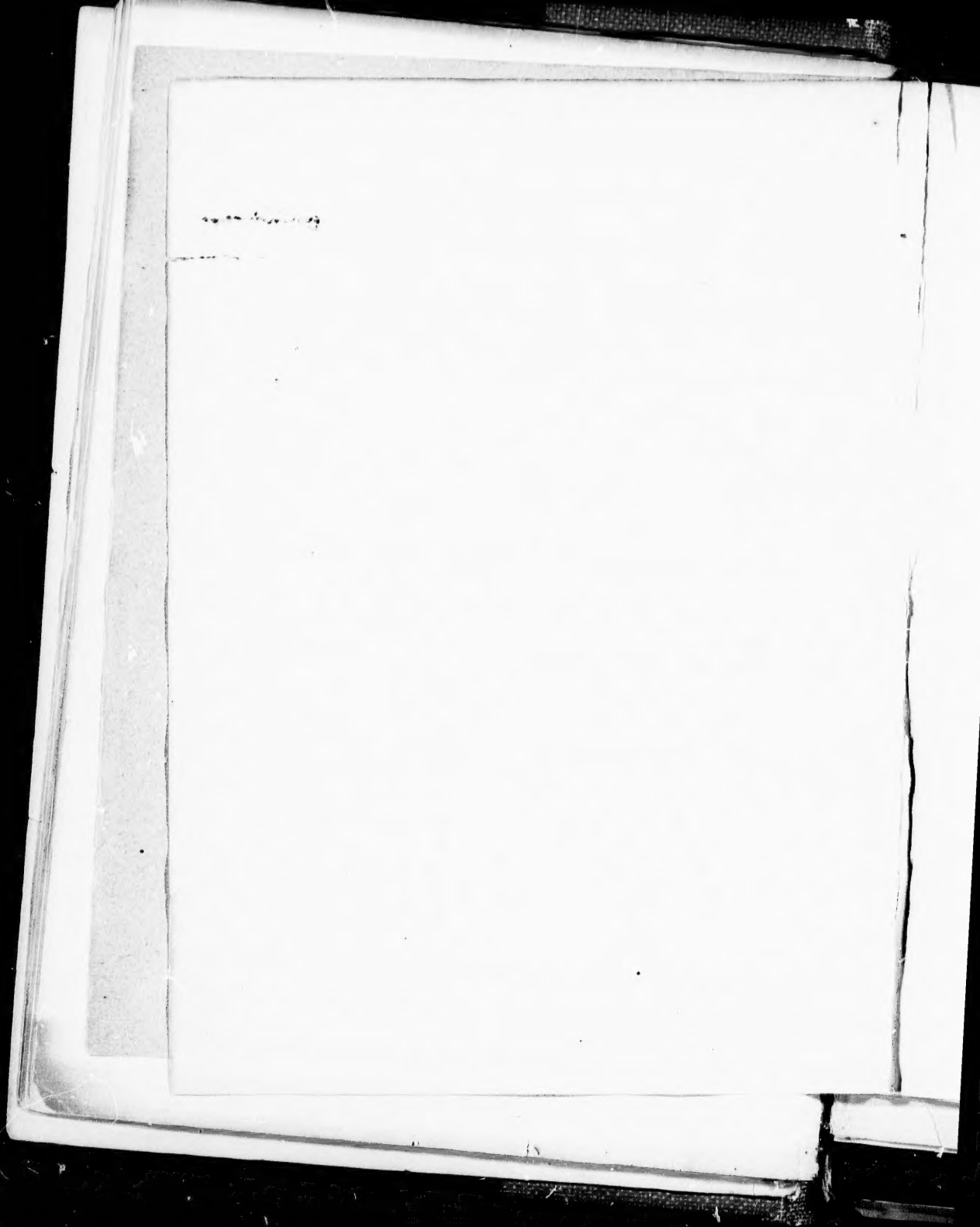
*Priest in Charge.*

---

SAINT JOHN, N. B.

ELLIS, ROBERTSON & Co. — "GLOBE" PRESS.

1892.



"So he fed them with a faithful and true heart,  
and ruled them prudently with all his power."

*Psalm lxxviii. 73.*

**N**OT many days ago, on a Sunday, and at Evensong, an aged prelate came up this aisle; stood in yonder chancel; spake the great words of absolving grace; gave us his blessing; and went his way, to serve no more within these walls; and soon to exchange the life of wondrous labor for the life of rest and peace in the Paradise of God. To this mission, and to its people, he had been more than father, and friend, and benefactor, for, as we know full well, all which has been gained and wrought, has been shaped, in part, by his wise counsel and upheld by his strong hand. As children, much bereaved, we draw near to each other, to think awhile of the dear life now withdrawn from our view, and to gather up a few—a very few—of the great lessons which he taught in the long years when he guided and fed this portion of the flock of God.

*In Memoriam.*

While there is a hush in the air and a shadow over the diocese, men are saying to each other, "That was a great career which found its earthly close last Friday." That was a great heart, which beats no more: and a great brain, which has been bright, and clear, and busy for many a long year with the grandest themes and interests: and a great will-power, which pressed right on, right through, right over the most real hindrances and difficulties: and a great wisdom, which knew how to deal with knotty problems and perplexing facts; and a great courage, which never quailed or failed: and a great patience which could wait, and wait, until the storm should pass, and the turmoil should cease: and a great firmness which could not and would not yield one inch of holy ground, or Catholic truth, or lofty principle, or steadfast conviction; and a great perseverance, which could renew, in the fitting time and way, some hindered purpose, or baffled effort: and a great energy, which kept vigorous nerves in an old manhood, until its work was done.

One would gladly turn to those pictures in the long life-story, which would give us the sturdy boyhood; the diligent student at Oxford: the curate serving in the rural life in Devon: the young priest toiling in Cornwall; the vicar and prebendary under the strong Bishop of

### *In Memoriam.*

Exeter: then himself a Bishop, crossing the seas to serve and rule, in Colonial life, a diocese, not too ready to understand and appreciate, and uphold him: and then, at last, the Metropolitan, honored, trusted, revered, wielding all his power for the welfare of the Church; ruling with gentle and gracious dignity, enforcing respect, winning admiration,—true to his work, true to his GOD, and true to the hope set before him.

Yet the sermon-space is ever brief; and we may be content just here and now, to ask what gave to Bishop MEDLEY, that vigorous, inflexible devotion to duty, at any and every cost, which made him the hero and the saint, and which fairly won for him, ere he fell asleep, the title of the Brave and Wise Bishop?

I. First, there was the clearest vision, in that strong and active mind, of the Catholic Church, as "the Church of the Living GOD, the pillar and ground of the truth." For him, who holds that verity, with an intense grasp, it is wonderful how much else is clear, in all the realms of faith and duty. Vagueness goes. Light comes, more and more. The CHRIST is not an absent LORD, but present with his priesthood, in His mysteries of the Altar, under the veil of the written Word, through His appointed means of grace,



*In Memoriam.*

by His angels leading His people, and sending His Spirit of Truth into a world of ignorance, and darkness and error. The Church of GOD, militant here, guarding, defending, proclaiming, upholding the truth of GOD, cherishing that truth as her most sacred trust,—living for it, glorying in it, and faithful to it above all things,—it is just this when fully and fairly apprehended, which ennobles and intensifies a Churchman's life. And it is this, my beloved, which is the prime element of power in the Episcopate. There is the semblance of power indeed, which comes with some brilliant gifts, and exquisite culture, and charm of oratory, and skill in organizing, and perilous toleration; and with that so-called "breadth of view," which is only broad because it is neither deep nor high, and with that "charity," which at last gives away as much of the truth as it firmly retains.

Our Bishop, now at rest, was grandly restful while he wrought, because he held the Catholic Faith, which upheld him. In wearied and troubled moments there comes to us a "great calm," when we say the Creed very slowly. After a second or third repetition, very often the clouds vanish. When we have come to see again, with keen and patient

### *In Memoriam.*

glance, the Church, as the very ark of God, the sense of peace and security is renewed; and when we behold her, as the pillar and ground of the truth, then we know that all is safe and well, where that truth abides, which the Church keeps and maintains, for the saving of our souls.

II. If one word of St. Paul could be chosen, as symbolizing Bishop MEDLEY's Episcopate, it might well be this,—"I magnify mine office." Never from that day when he first put on his robes to the day when last, with trembling hand, he took them off, did he ever seem to forget, or allow any one else to forget, that he was a Bishop in the Church of GOD. Whatever else he might be—courteous gentleman, ripe and accurate scholar, gracious host, skilful architect or musician, thoughtful counsellor, in all, but above all, the grandeur of his office lost nothing in his conscious estimate of its sacred dignity and its holy responsibilities. It is a cruel mistake, when men choose to think that this savors, in a devout servant of GOD, of aught, which destroys humility. Far from it. The humblest heart may recognize, with ever deeper lowliness, before GOD, the height of a great trust, which must not be imperilled, in our keeping.

*In Memoriam.*

So, he magnified, that is, made great,—never himself—but always that office, which had come to him, from the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

While his personal life was noteworthy for rare simplicity in all which pertained to fashion and style, he did not disdain, here and there, the symbols and tokens of his vocation, as the Bishop of a diocese, as the Metropolitan Bishop of a province, as the successor of the Apostles. Yet, it was never the outward claim as separated from the interior reality, but it was the harmonious recognition and exercise of power, which had come to him, and which must be made visible and forcible, for the sake of the highest ends and the very noblest results. Nor is it easy, at once, to measure the influence of such attitude and character upon the Episcopate of the whole province—upon the Episcopate of the future.

If there have been days when Bishops have seemed to lower their office and to elevate themselves; to magnify their personality, and minimize their awful trust; we may hope tha' such days will never return. Bishop MEDLEY will be remembered and<sup>\*</sup> revered, as one who did great honor to the place, which he was called to fill, and to the authority, which he was called to wield.

*In Memoriam.*

III. Whoever is to take high and strict reckoning of duty, and to keep a true and lofty conscience, must say farewell to all pitiful longings for popularity. "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you," for that would be, to be most unlike your LORD. So, St. Paul again could write, out of a heart which greatly prized all human sympathies, "with me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." There was nothing supercilious or cynical in such words, it was only the calm thought of the perfect tribunal before which he should stand at the end of his days, and in comparison with which the judgment of any group of fallible men lost all its terror, and almost all its value.

When a Bishop of another nationality was once asked, with reference to a painful course, which he was led to take,—"but, will anybody befriend or uphold you in that step?" he paused a moment, and said meekly and reverently,—“nobody but God,” and went straightforward to meet the issue. Surely, this later word of St. Paul might well describe, in very troubled hours, Bishop MEDLEY's position and experience. It is hard to believe that he was ever swayed by thought of frown or favor, applause or censure, approval or opposition, as these might come from human sources, and through human channels.

### *In Memoriam.*

"Man's judgment" seldom controlled his decisions, or determined his course. There was something sublime, when that humble heart seemed to fear nothing, save only recreancy to his position, and such weakness and weariness, as might possibly yield, under the stress and pressure of human opinion. That it ever did so yield probably no one would venture for a moment to affirm.

Popularity—how little of it came to him in the earlier days of his Episcopate—how little he cared that it should ever come to him, if it must cost the lowering of any standard, the retreat from any ground, which he had been led to occupy, or the surrender of any prerogative, which belonged to a Bishop in the Church of God.

Who does not recognize, at once, that such men are fearless, simply because they fear GOD alone, and fear always to offend Him, and seek to live near to Him; that His favor is alike their most earnest desire and their most coveted reward.

IV. It must be for others, and not for me, to pay rightful tribute to Bishop MEDLEY, as a preacher. Yet, from the much which I have heard, I must believe that in this he was pre-eminently "a workman

*In Memoriam.*

that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." It could hardly be otherwise, in view of a strict conscientiousness, a careful scholarship, a thoughtful mind, a devout heart, and the most real fidelity. It may be that he lacked some of the lighter graces, which now-a-days are unduly esteemed, the rhetorician's art, the vivid imagination, the half-secular treatment of half-secular themes, the excited declamation, the very persuasive tongue, or the very attractive manner in the pulpit. Yet I must believe that his words were clear, and strong, and weighty, that he left no doubt in any mind, as to what the Church had received and must transmit: as to what and where is that narrow way, which leads through time to a blest eternity: as to what is Catholic truth, and what is heretical opinion, and what is mere speculation and fancy.

In this, one can see a model, not incapable, perhaps, of added charm, but having the most real worth, and sure, in the end, to reach the most real good. Of the lasting effects of preaching it is not granted to us to know anything. One can only trust, with a quiet confidence, that "the right dividing" and ministering of the word of truth leads, in God's time and way, to all those ends which God, by "the foolishness of preaching," is pleased somehow to accomplish.

### *In Memoriam.*

V. It is not easy, at once, to throw back our thought over the space of forty-seven years, to that first summer and winter, when the young Bishop began his journeyings in this region, and thence on to the later years when he was called to "endure hardness," in the charge of this diocese.

How feebly can we recognize what it meant, and what it cost. In this, as in so much else, he was "an example of the believers," a true Missionary of the Cross, in toils, in perils, in travels, in exposure and hardship, in the persistent effort to gather the scattered members of the household of faith; to secure the funds; to find the priests; to found and strengthen the missions and parishes; to build the churches; to overcome prejudice; to bear the conflicts with ignorance; and still, as the work grew, to feel the burden heavier, and all the trials none the lighter, as misunderstanding and distrust so slowly retreated. One is amazed, at what the grace of God did in that soul, and at thought of how the spirit of ghostly strength dwelt richly in that ripening character.

VI. Nor, last of all (and surely it was not the least of all), may we forget that quiet hopefulness and cheerfulness, which refused to know discouragement,

*In Memoriam.*

even in darkest hours, because one still could pray, and still, all things were possible with God. One hears no sighs, no murmurs, lifted from the much-tried heart. In the main, serenity marks the features, and guides the words, and tones the voice.

It is as though the good man went aside right often, to hear again the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee," to get some glimpse of the King in His beauty in the land, which is not so very far away: and to see, as held in the pierced Hand, the crown, which is kept and promised, for those who are "faithful unto death."

Ah, there was a hidden life, which was the secret, after all, of what he dared, and wrought, and endured — a life which was hid in God. And within that curtain we may not look. Of all that mystery, we may not dare to speak.

As we turn to the Altar to-day, and bear one dear name more upon the unseen wings up to the throne of light, we shall ask now, and often hereafter, that the very peace of God, that holy rest in God, that blessed light from God, may be the refreshment of that soul evermore.

As we recall the wise and true-hearted Shepherd, who has gone to the bright pastures and still waters



*In Memoriam.*

of Paradise, and think of all that he has been, and of all that he has done, for the priests and the people in this diocese, we may take up the Psalmist's word and say of him, with grateful love, what was said of that Shepherd, so long ago, in his care of the Israel of GOD—"he fed them with a faithful and true heart and ruled them prudently with all his power."



**At a Meeting of the Priest and Trustees of the Mission Church of Saint John Baptist, in the City of Saint John, N. B., held on Friday, the Ninth day of September, A. D. 1892;**

The following Minute was unanimously agreed to:

**Whereas**, in the fulness of time, laden with years and honour, The Most Reverend JOHN MEDLEY, D. D., Lord Bishop of The Diocese of Fredericton, has, on this ninth day of September, passed from his Throne in the Catholic Church to the Rest of Paradise;

We, the Priest in charge, and the Trustees of The Mission Church of Saint John Baptist, humbly desire to place on the records of this Church the expression of our faithful and loving reverence for the memory of our late Diocesan. While, in his long Episcopate, he had, by his consistent and devoted attachment to the Church in which he was so eminent an Overseer, by his unbounded liberality, and by his simple, self-denying and holy life, overcome all opposition and secured the affectionate loyalty of clergy and people within his own Diocese, together with the respect of the whole English Church, rising at the same time to the highest position possible in the Province of Canada, we, of this Mission Church, must always especially cherish his memory for the resolute stand which he took and unflinchingly maintained in regard to this Church, and the deep and fatherly concern which he never failed to manifest in its welfare.

By the death of the distinguished and beloved Bishop of Fredericton, not we, not this Diocese, not the Province of Canada only, but the whole Anglican Communion sustains a great and almost irreparable loss.—GOD, of His Mercy, grant him Refreshment and Light Eternal.

**Resolved**, that a copy of the above minute be forwarded to MRS. MEDLEY, with the respectful and heart-felt sympathy of The Priest and Trustees.